Testimony of  
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National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA)  
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On behalf of the National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA), I want to thank you for providing us with the opportunity to comment on Air Quality & Public Health—an issue that is crucial to the health and well-being of Latino families, and since one out of four Americans will be Hispanic in the next 25 years, that of the country at large.

Established in 1994, the National Hispanic Medical Association is a non-profit association representing the interests of 50,000 licensed Hispanic physicians in the United States. NHMA's vision is to be the national leader to improve the health of Hispanic populations. Our mission is to empower Hispanic physicians to lead efforts to improve the health of Hispanic and other underserved populations in collaboration with the state Hispanic medical societies, resident and medical student organizations, and other public and private sector partners.

As physicians and health care providers that serve underrepresented populations in rural and urban communities that have worse air quality and other environmental hazards in our communities add to the challenges and health disparities facing Latinos communities across the country. About 25% of Latinos are burdened with the health impacts from air pollution due to high levels of poverty and low rates of health insurance.1

**Child Health:**

- Latino communities are burdened by 153,000 asthma attacks and 112,000 lost school days
- Climate change is responsible for thousands of premature deaths, hundreds of missed work or school days, and higher risks of asthma attacks;
- The odds of an asthma diagnosis by the age of 5 is approximately 50% higher among Hispanic children than for non-Hispanic Whites.2
- Latino children are twice as likely to be hospitalized from asthma attacks, as compared to non-Hispanic whites.

**Adults:**

- Latinos are more likely to face the impacts of climate change because of where we live.
- Because so many Latinos work in construction and agriculture jobs are more likely affected by air pollution, heat, flooding and more intense storms
- The air in many Latino Communities violates the federal air pollution standards for ozone.3
- Ozone exposure at levels not associated with lung function changes were associated with platelet activation and blood pressure changes, suggesting that ozone exposure may affect cardiovascular health.4

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1 Latino Communities at Risk: The Impact of Air Pollution from the Oil and Gas Industry. 2016. Pages 10-12  
3 Latino Communities at Risk: The Impact of Air Pollution from the Oil and Gas Industry. 2016. Pages 10-12  
Seniors:
- Pneumonia especially affects our seniors who end up in poor air quality in nursing homes, frail and burdened by chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease.
- Studies have shown that long-term exposure to air pollution increases mortality, especially for Older-Americans aged 65 and higher and for racial minorities and low income.5

Environmental Protection Agency:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the leadership of Scott Pruitt is aggressively seeking to rollback protections that keep vulnerable communities safe. His reckless repeal of the Clean Power Plan, America’s first federal limits on dangerous carbon pollution from power plants, could lead to 4,500 more premature deaths every year by 2030, according to the Trump administration’s own measures. His going after fuel efficiency standards that have saved families more than $50 billion at the pump, and which EPA itself concluded were working and achievable. The EPA repealed limits on toxic discharge from power plants, allowing more arsenic, lead and mercury into our streams and rivers. One of the agency’s first actions was to allow continued use of chlorpyrifos, a pesticide that has long-term harmful effects on children. He overruled EPA scientists, who are now being replaced with representatives from the industry.

The NHMA is involved in two suits against the EPA on the continued use of Chlorpyrifos and the replacement of members of the advisory committee with members who are more industry friendly.

End Statements:

NHMA urges Congress to pass legislation that will protect our communities and reverse the damage done by this Administration to Air Quality and our Latino communities. Public health measures, such as effective smoking prevention and cessation programs, reduction of air pollution and exposure to biomass smoke, and improved access to health care, would help reduce the burden of respiratory conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD and asthma, among Hispanics in the United States.6

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